



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Division  
for Church  
In Society

July 17, 2001

The Honorable John Dingell  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Dingell:

**On behalf of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we are writing to endorse the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001 (H.R. 526). We believe this is strong, bipartisan patient protection legislation that should become law.**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America believes that all should have access to the kind of health maintenance and care that will lead to a healthful physical existence. Public policy must ensure that health plans provide the kind of care to which patients are entitled under the plan.

The Bipartisan Patient Protection Act has many positive features. It 1) provides for strong, comprehensive patient protections; 2) applies a uniform federal floor of protections to all individuals with private health insurance, while allowing states to enact additional protective standards; 3) ensures patient recourse to a speedy and genuinely independent external review process when care is denied; and 4) allows patients to hold their managed care plan accountable when plan decisions to withhold or limit care result in injury or death. We believe accountability is essential.

A bill providing strong protections and accountability is vital to all people. When individuals are ill, they are particularly vulnerable and must be able to count on basic patient protections for peace of mind regarding their health care needs. Many are dissatisfied with the current health care system. It is critically important that medical decision making is placed in the hands of medical experts and not insurance company personnel who never examine or even see the patient. We do not oppose private industry profits, but those profits should never be at the expense of the health and well-being of individuals.

We thank you for your continued leadership on behalf of patients through the sponsorship of this meaningful, enforceable legislation.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Russell O. Siler  
Director

Kay A. Bengston  
Assistant Director - Domestic Policy